



This month's newsletter is about astrotourism and dark sky activities for travellers.

What exactly is astrotourism?

This means traveling for space-related experiences here on earth. Meaning exploring rural destinations that have less light pollution and beautiful surroundings. It also means visiting places for their amazing dark skies, stunning solar eclipse viewpoints, stargazing opportunities or research facilities and observatories. It also offers tourists an outdoor and nighttime activity. A great product development opportunity for tourism operators!

RTO9 News



Fireside Chat Webinar with Eric Termuende & Sean Billing

October 12, 2021

Topic: Attracting and Retaining Tomorrow's Top Talent

About: With the light at the end of the tunnel being brighter than it has been in months, companies across the region and country are faced with a talent crisis. According to Achievers' Workforce Institute, an astonishing 52% of people are interested in taking a new job this year. How is it that we can tell the right story to attract the right people and seamlessly bring them on to our teams? And when they arrive, what can we do to keep everyone engaged and productive? Yesterday's best practices aren't necessarily 'best' today and how we tell our story to attract and keep top talent must change.

In this thought-provoking fireside chat, hear from [workplace and talent expert Eric Termuende](#) and Kingston's Sean Billing of the Frontenac Club as they discuss workforce struggles, new insights and research to build incredible places to work both today and into the future. From what the next generation of work is looking for to future workplace trends, these must-hear insights will help you prepare for an exciting and unpredictable 2022 and beyond.

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Travel Trade Webinar

November 18th, 2021, 10 AM - 11 AM

Please join industry expert Sandra Rice for an update on Travel Trade

- What to expect regarding demand for travel, group travel, FIT's into 2022.
- Learn how the pandemic affected travel trade.

This session will be designed for operators that have worked in travel trade and those that are considering it.

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Sandra is the Business Development Manager, North America at Destination Ontario. Sandra has been with the organization since 2000, marketing Ontario as a preferred destination domestically and internationally. She works closely with the industry developing relationships with tourism stakeholders providing education and opportunities for partners to connect with key distribution channels in Canada, USA and Mexico.

What is the Safe Travels Stamp and Why is it Important to Tourism?

November 18th, 2021, 10 AM - 11 AM

It's more than wearing masks, donning gloves and maintaining social distancing. The Safe Travels Stamp is based on worldwide industry protocols. It identifies businesses which have adopted global standardized health and hygiene protocols. Join the webinar to learn more about TIAO and the WTTC, the Safe Travels Stamp, and how to apply for yours.

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In Case you Missed it: Workshops & Tourism Summit

2021 Tourism Summit: The Path Forward

BRAND STRATEGY



Google Search Console 101

A diagram illustrating the 3 Pillars of SEO. The diagram features three overlapping circles: a green circle labeled "Content", a red circle labeled "Links", and a grey circle labeled "Technical". A play button icon is overlaid on the "Links" circle. The text "What is SEO?" and "3 Pillars of SEO" is displayed on the left side. A small video feed of a person is visible in the top right corner. The "search warrant" logo is in the bottom right corner.

Google My Business 102



Market Insights



1. Resident Sentiment

Destination Canada's resident sentiment report reveals how safe residents feel about travelling to different places in Canada. Here are the highlights for the week of September 21:

- 81% of Ontarians said they feel safe about travel to communities in their province and 59% said they feel safe about travel to other provinces/territories within Canada. Only 28% said the same about travelling to the United States and 27% about travelling internationally.
- Ontario residents' overall level of welcome toward visitors has remained stable towards visitors from all destinations. Sentiment has generally been stable towards all in-province visitors since mid-July and towards all out-of-province domestic visitors since the end of July.

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2. Increased Interest in Stargazing: Pandemic Effect

The concept of astrotourism was already growing before COVID-19, in large part because much of the world's population lives in urban areas with heavy light pollution and a lack of night-sky visibility. But the pandemic has seen an even greater interest in the night sky, in part because for many of us who have been stuck at home in confined spaces or with little access to the outdoors, the sky has provided the only limitless sense of space.

Astrotourism is:

- Eco friendly, naturally socially distanced, and can be done anywhere in the world, though inevitably it is best in the great outdoors where the light pollution of our towns and cities doesn't obscure the stars.
- One of the best community based astrotourism projects already underway is Astrostays in Ladakh, high in the Indian Himalayas. An imaginative social enterprise, female homestay hosts have been given telescopes and trained as night sky guides. Tourists can hike by day and stargaze by night, and the women who guide them not only earn additional income, but are stimulating an interest in astronomy and astrophysics in their villages.

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3. Jasper Dark Sky Festival

Every year in October stargazers from all over the world head to Alberta to catch a glimpse at one of the best star shows around during the Jasper Dark Sky Festival. Jasper National Park has become one of Canada's most popular astrotourism destinations. The second-largest dark sky preserves in the world with over 4,247 sq miles (11,000 sq km), on a clear night, you'll take in stellar stars almost anywhere in the park. Get lost in the wonders of the skies when you power down and look up.

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Workforce Development



How to Adapt to the Labour Shortage Situation

This study is based on two BDC surveys: a survey of 1,251 Canadian entrepreneurs on labour market conditions conducted in May 2021 and a survey of 3,000 Canadians on their jobs and related challenges conducted in June 2021.

This study shows that proven solutions can help Canadian SMEs reduce the impact of labour scarcity.

These strategies include the following:

- Adopting new technologies and automation
- Using formal hiring processes
- Offering a total compensation package

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2021 Ontario Tourism Summit

October 26 & 27, 2021

About: This year's summit is about RESPECT, COLLABORATION and REBUILDING our future. Join us as we recognize all the innovation, re-embrace the foundation and collaborate together – Google, Deloitte, Canadian Live Music Association, Global Payments are just some highlights of speakers lined up for this year's event.

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VIRTUAL SUMMIT: The FoodTreX Innovation Summit

October 28, 2021

About: This year's event will be held 100% online. The aim is to connect destinations, entrepreneurs and key stakeholders from around the world to focus on the business of culinary tourism development and promotion. Topics include wine tourism in unexpected places and the role of food and drink in cultural destinations.

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Media Spotlight



Astrostays in the Indian Himalayas

Mountain Homestays created Astrostays in various villages of Ladakh (Indian Himalayas), by installing high-end sophisticated telescopes. The interesting part of this concept is that it creates sustainable livelihoods through community-led astrotourism activities. Local women running these homestays are not just trained in hospitality but also in operating the telescopes and reading the night sky. Astrotourism goes beyond stargazing as visitors can expect a holistic program involving cultural heritage and exchange, local products and cuisine, indigenous folklore, and sustainable living.

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In Nova Scotia, Every Night is a Star-Studded Event

Closer to home, have a look at what [Yarmouth and Acadian Shores, Nova Scotia](#) have developed around stargazing. The region has been designated the first Starlight Reserve in North America by The International Starlight Foundation and one of AirBNB's trending astrotourism destinations.

For example, business owners of [Trout Point Lodge of Nova Scotia](#) have put together an amazing package: Starlight Culinary Escape. This package includes accommodations, gourmet dining, guided forest walk and an exclusive nighttime tasting of Nova Scotia chocolates and sparkling wine as celestial stories and secrets of the dark sky preserve are shared by an astronomy expert on the resort's stargazing platform.



Around the globe: 1st International Astrotourism Congress

The first International Astrotourism Congress took place in September at Portugal's University of Evora. It aimed to promote sustainable tourism for people who simply want to look at the stars.

- Up to 40 percent of tourists are now thought to travel to Dark Sky destinations specifically for stargazing.

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Around the globe: World Tourism Day

September 27 marked the annual World Tourism Day. This is an international date of recognition to bring awareness to the social, cultural, political and economic value of the visitor economy, and how it can contribute to reaching the

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out by the UN. Tourism is recognized as a pillar in most, if not all, SDGs. These goals are a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all – addressing global challenges we face, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. “The recovery of Canada’s visitor economy is key to Canada’s overall economic growth – and we still have a long way to go – the restart of tourism will help recovery and growth globally. It is vital that this once \$105 billion industry in Canada be recognized as the important economic driver it is,” said Beth Potter, President and CEO of TIAC.

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Opportunities

Ontario Adding New Resources To Protect Workers

The Ontario government is continuing to protect workers and people from COVID-19 by providing businesses with new tools and educational resources, including a new safety plan builder and additional inspectors. More than 100 new health and safety inspectors are graduating today and will be visiting workplaces in construction, industrial and health care settings. With the support of provincial offences officers, the inspectors will be deployed to help educate workers and businesses about the newly-launched vaccine certificate.

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Ontario Investing \$100 Million to Help Tourism Sector Rebound From COVID-19

The Ontario government is investing \$100 million through the new Tourism Recovery Program to help stabilize the province’s tourism industry as it recovers from the impacts of COVID-19. The program will help for-profit tourism businesses in the attraction, accommodation, and leisure travel sectors protect critical jobs in communities across the province and help them prepare to reopen and safely welcome back visitors.

For more information, read the news release [here](#).

For a full list of eligible businesses, activities, and application details, visit the Ontario Tourism Recovery Program page [here](#).

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'Safe Travels' Stamp Application

The specially designed stamp will allow travellers and other Travel & Tourism stakeholders to recognise destination authorities and companies around the world that have implemented health and hygiene protocols that are aligned with WTTC's Global Safe Travels Protocols.

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Safe Travels Stamp Awards

The Safe Travels Stamp Award is a way for your customers and local residents to recognize your business's outstanding efforts in adopting the World Travel & Tourism Council's health and hygiene global standardized protocols for the hospitality and tourism sector.

There are 13 Safe Travels Stamp Awards to be won: one for each tourism region in Ontario. Voting runs from September 7 - October 11, 2021. Top finalists and winners will be announced on October 26 at the 2021 Ontario Tourism Summit

Step 1

Ensure you are Safe Travels Stamp approved. You can check the list of approved Safe Travel Stamp applicants [here](#).

Step 2

Get the word out! Use your digital Safe Travels Stamp logo on social media and proudly proclaim your Safe Travels Stamp approval. Don't forget to place your Safe Travels Stamp sticker in a prominent location in your business. (If you haven't received your sticker yet, it is in the mail and you will have it soon!) Be sure that your team understands and can explain what it means to be Safe Travels Stamp approved. If you need more information, please check out the [Safe Travels Stamp Training Guideline](#).

Step 3

Get votes! The top vote-getter within each of the thirteen tourism regions of Ontario will win the Safe Travels Stamp Award. Public voting is now open. Use social media and in-person conversations to let your customers and local residents know about the Safe Travels Award campaign. [The voting link can be found here](#).

Every month, we'll be sending you the latest insights, research and thoughtful perspectives on the issues that matter most to tourism businesses and operators in RTO 9.

If there are any topics you want to read about in a future newsletter, please email lmedeiros@region9tourism.com with your ideas.

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